

Test Show Several Corn Silage Varieties Good Here

Editor's Note: In light of the renewed interest in corn production in the Rogue valley, the following article is presented as a report of research on experimentation in southern Oregon.

The midwest corn belt may yet have to "look to its laurels" if test corn production is any indication of what can be grown locally.

Research and test work on corn varieties has been carried on in southern Oregon since 1949, according to Harold White, superintendent of the southern Oregon Experiment Station, located on highway 99 south of Phoenix.

Local Yields

The work was started when it was noted that the corn raised in Jackson and Josephine counties in 1949 produced according to the U.S. Census, an average yield of only 28 bushels to the acre, and an average of only 6.3 tons per acre when cut for silage. Such yields of course are not profitable. Use of unsuitable land areas, poor fertilization practices and poor corn varieties coupled with the historical abuse of land were contributing factors to this poor production. In an effort to discover better varieties, 22 screened hybrid varieties of corn were tested the first year and other new varieties are being tested annually.

According to John Yungen, agronomist at the station, the tests have shown several silage varieties which are well suited for this area. They include Illinois 1670, Illinois 200, and U.S. 13. All three are high yielding hybrids especially suited for use where the grower is looking for maximum silage production. Other varieties which have shown the most promise from the standpoint of grain production are Idaho 544 when planted early on good, irrigated land, and Western Hybrid 90 if late planting is required. This is one of the so-called "90" day, early maturing varieties.

Growing Days

A review of weather statistics reveals that over a 30 year period the average number of growing days for Grants Pass is 163 days, 176 for Medford, and 162 days for the Talent area. For this reason, all of the field tests have been aimed at a high yielding corn which will mature in an average of 150 days. Suggested planting date this year is between May 1 and 10, based on the weather records adapted to local areas to avoid frost.

Because of high humidity in the Rogue River valley during the fall corn for grain comes out of the field with a high moisture content. This necessitates a special type or crib for storage or artificial drying. This problem of high moisture content at harvest time has led to some study of drying equipment. In 1955 and 1956 the local experiment station conducted tests with forced hot air drying. The tests indicated that the corn can be reduced to around 13 per cent moisture content at a cash cost. This would be considerably below the freight rate of \$23 on shelled corn from the midwest to Medford. It is economically feasible and would represent a substantial saving to the feeder.

The recommendations for local corn acreage are based on the need to replace the loss of cash farm income from seed crops. The raising of livestock is a suggested substitute, but there is a need for local forage and particularly feed grains to produce a better finished animal for the market.

Rogue valley meat packing facilities can absorb a reasonable amount of locally grown meat animals, providing these animals are finished off on small grains or corn. Meat packing house operators emphasized the need for a well rounded feeding program, including small grains and corn as supplements.

Currently by far the greater percentage of beef for slaughter and consumption locally is im-

ported and practically all the hogs are grown elsewhere. Good supplies of corn for finishing should result in increased interest in locally grown meat animals, both beef and hogs. One local meat packer reports that most of his hogs are shipped in from Nebraska.

Shelled Corn Price

Locally grown shelled corn would enjoy an estimated \$23 per ton price advantage over midwestern corn which is shipped in by rail. This advantage is more than ample to allow for the increased cost of the drying process considered necessary.

Valley milling operators estimate that in excess of 150 carloads of corn, both shelled corn and corn in mixed feed, are shipped into southern Ore-

gon annually. This market potential plus an export market to other adjacent areas in southern Oregon and northern California gives promise of sale for substantial acreage of shelled corn production, providing economical drying operations are established locally.

Ben Tucker, county agent for agriculture, explained that corn has a wider adaptation for soil type than any other field crop presently grown in Jackson county. In 1956, an estimated 1980 acres were planted to corn for silage and 332 acres for grain. This could well be increased substantially.

Yields Reported

C. W. (Wes) McDonough, a farmer in the Sams Valley area, reported good yield last year and is contemplating increased acreage this year. His farm is located one mile north of Sams Valley school. McDonough recently purchased a commercial corn dryer. He will dry his own production and will contract to dry corn for other farmers in the valley. The drying equipment will be located at the disposal plant in White City, handy to corn growing areas. It is capable of handling 36 tons of shelled corn per 24-hour day.

Other corn producers who have had good corn silage production and who plan to continue include Dick Saltgaver, Lloyd Hammond, Homer Conger in the Central Point district, Straus brothers, Burreson brothers in Sam Valley, T. A. Parker at Tolo and Roy Colpitts north of Medford.

Transition Suggested

Agonomists agree that recommendations are centered at the present time on corn planted primarily for silage with a gradual transition to growing of corn for grain as drying facilities are expanded. Inherent conditions for market use include the needed expansion of the livestock feeding program to absorb increased silage corn production. Extension specialists are in accord in recommending only such planned production as has a firm market. The difficulty and the high cost of transporting silage makes it necessary to plan to feed silage in the immediate vicinity of storage facilities.

In summing up the situation in this area, White and Tucker commented on the need for close work between extension specialists and the farmer to work out the best program for a given area. Improved varieties, sound fertilization programs based on soil tests, and better production practices point the way to a good potential for local growers who wish to increase their plantings of corn this year and in the years to come. Research has demonstrated that outstanding yields of both shelled corn and silage corn are possible and economically feasible under proper conditions.

Growers in both Jackson and Josephine counties have obtained even higher yields than have been grown at the experiment station. This leaves little doubt that more farmers, prospecting for a cash income crop, will find it in corn. Commercial growers should strive for 100 bushels per acre on average irrigated land. Better soils will exceed this.

Points Suggested

Farmers planning new or additional corn production either for silage or for grain are urged to consider carefully four important points: (1) the necessity for firm market commitment in excess of local use, (2) proper fertilization programs, (3) proper and adequate irrigation, (4) good production practices including weed control, etc.

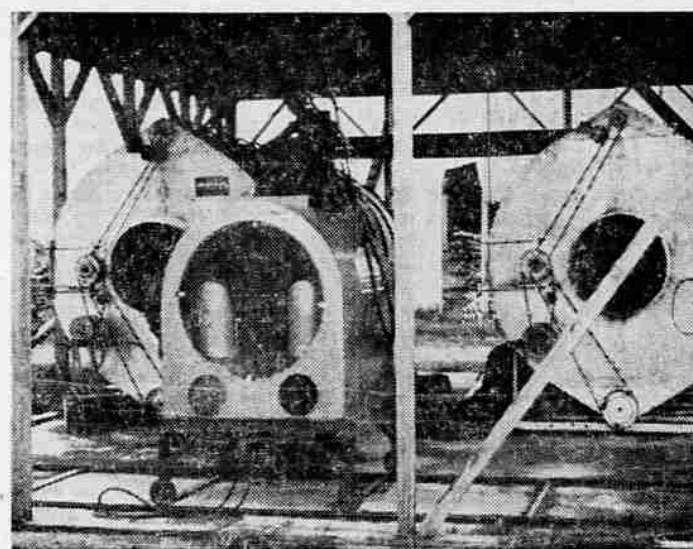
Any producer planning this year is encouraged to make use of the data available from county agents and experiment station personnel. In this way there is a greater chance of a successful operation on a modest scale to point the way to even greater corn production in the Rogue River valley in the future.



SILAGE HARVEST—This picture shows the 1956 field harvest of silage corn on the Homer Conger farm near Central Point. The tractor driver is Dick Saltgaver and the truck driver is Frank Hammon, both of Central Point. This stand of corn is Illinois Hybrid number 1570, planted in 36 inch rows, 28,000 plants to the acre. It was harvested Oct. 5, 1956 and the yield was 39 tons of silage per acre, due in large measure to a good fertilization program.

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Farm and Garden



CORN DRYER—Wes McDonough of Sams Valley recently purchased a corn dryer of this type for use in drying his own corn and contract drying for others. The unit in the foreground is the heating element, which burns butane or propane gas. This hot air is then forced by an electric powered blower, into the rotating drying drum in the rear. Maximum drying capacity of the machine is 36 tons of shelled corn in a 24-hour drying day.

Local Young People Will Attend School

The executive council of the Jackson County 4-H Leaders association Monday selected 26 boys and 24 girls to attend the annual 4-H summer school June 11-21 at Oregon State college.

Two alternates, a boy and a girl, were also selected to attend the session if any cancellations are made.

Boys Selected
Boys scheduled to attend the session are Carl Skyrman, Central Point; Truman Elmore, Applegate; Ronald Daugherty, Medford; Larry Meyer, Eagle Point; James Renuau, Talent; Bobby Holt, Medford; Matt Rode, Medford; Earl Bowen, Rogue River; Bob Kuest Medford; David Foote, Central Point; Terry Gall, Gold Hill; Charles Bedcock, Rogue River; Craig Wright, Medford; Gary Richardson, Talent; Wayne Dismore, Talent; James Scott, Medford; Gene Holt, Medford; James Frank, Central Point; Dean Sommer, Talent; Bill Anhorn, Central Point; John James, Talent; Gerald Renuau, Talent; and Russel Frink, Central Point.

Girls Selected
Girls planning to attend the summer school are Nancy Barnes, Medford; Even Niedermeyer, Medford; Roma Shafer, Prospect; Joan Dobrot, Central Point; Susie Palm, Eagle Point; Nyla Murray, Medford; Romelle Fossen, Jacksonville; Sharon Coffman, Central Point; Virginia Martin, Medford; Carol von der Hellen, Central Point; Margaret Taylor, Central Point; Carol Myers, Medford; Ann Darl-Nougier, Medford; Ursula Bates, Medford; Mavis Strom, Medford; Alison Pinkham, Central Point; Nelda Chapman, Talent; Julie Ashton, Central Point; Patsy Charley, Medford; Marilyn Martin, Medford; Pat Cranston, Medford; Mary Daniels, Central Point; and Karen Jossy, Eagle Point.

Alternate boy is Steve Geren, Eagle Point, and alternate girl is Daryl Zapell, Talent. County 4-H Agents Miss Marjorie Hattan and Glenn Klein said some of the club members may cancel their reservations and names are being taken for the summer school waiting list.

Calcium is the nutrient most likely to be short in the diets of city-dwellers.

4,000 Soil Samples Tested in Oregon
Corvallis—More than 4,000 soil samples from Oregon farms were tested during the past year by the Oregon State college soil testing laboratory as cost-conscious farmers tried to boost returns from each dollar spent for fertilizers and lime.

The testing service, started in 1953, provides a standard \$2.50 soil test that shows potash and phosphorus needs, degree of acid in western Oregon soils, and an alkali test for eastern Oregon. An analysis for magnesium requirements was recently added to the western Oregon test.

An instruction leaflet, "How To Take A Soil Sample—And Why," prepared by soil conservation specialists T. L. Jackson and Arthur King is available from county extension offices or the OSC bulletin clerk. County agents can also explain special tests available and ACP cost-sharing programs for liming soils.

Seed Officials Group Schedules Meeting
Salem—New procedures in testing seeds and marketing practices related to regulatory inspection are among features slated for the annual meeting of the Western States Seed Officials association, slated for Oregon May 2 and 3.

Sessions will be held at Oregon State college so officials may view the state seed testing laboratory, according to Hugh Taylor, Salem, western regional member on the ex-

ecutive committee of the National Seed Control Officials. The program also will include discussions on cooperation between certification and seed control agencies; demonstrations of seed blending methods; variety testing; a talk on public relations for seed inspectors; and a tour of the state seed processing and testing laboratories.

The word giraffe means "the one who moves swiftly."

Sheep Destroyed To Control Scrapie

Salem—Recent quarantine and destruction of a large flock of purebred sheep in Oregon and similar action on a ram and its progeny in another flock here should not be cause for alarm on the part of the Oregon sheep breeders. Neither should it cause the general public to be alarmed because the disease is not contagious to humans and affects only sheep and goats.

This assurance comes from Dr. A. G. Beagle, in charge of livestock disease programs in Oregon for the federal government, and Dr. K. J. Peterson, who holds a similar position with the state department of agriculture.

Recently 1,400 purebred sheep were destroyed on the Vassar ranch in California where scrapie was diagnosed. Federal and state officials are now engaged in tracing all animals sold from this ranch, and they and their progeny will be destroyed. As a result, several ranches in Oregon will have one or more sheep possibly exposed to the disease which must be destroyed.

Also, scrapie diagnosed in the Hutchinson and Whiteside flock at Lincoln, California, was traced back to the Broadmead Farm at Amity. This situation, together with two other known cases and another suspicious one

Two-Year Study Compares Silage Preserving Plans

Results of a two-year study comparing two popular methods of preserving grass silage as compared to no preservative have been released just in time to make plans for this year's silage program.

Preservatives tested were dried beet pulp and sodium metabisulfite. Results of this study show considerable advantage in use of dried molasses beet pulp, according to Earle Jossy, county agriculture agent.

Beet Pulp Silage
Dried molasses beet pulp reduced juice losses and absorbed enough nutrients to more than pay its costs. It was also higher in dry matter, more digestible and more palatable. Cows produced better on beet pulp silage, which also showed less damage by rain in the normal development of silage preserving bacteria, but the silage was of good quality.

These results were obtained by J. V. Bateman and I. R. Jones, dairy husbandmen at Oregon State college.

Sodium metabisulfite and beet pulp were compared in 1954-55. Ensiled forage was first cutting alfalfa with 20 per cent grass. In one silo, 200 pounds of beet pulp per ton of forage was spread on the forage in the wagons before blowing in the silo. Eight pounds of sodium metabisulfite per ton was added to the other silo by adding to the forage at the blower. Both silos were wood stave, upright 12½ by 33 feet.

Test Continued

In 1955-56, the bottom halves of both silos were filled with oats and peas and the top halves with oats and vetch. Two hundred pounds of beet pulp per ton was added to one silo and no preservative to the other.

The alfalfa grass silage made in 1954-55 was fed to two groups of 12 cows paired according to age, weight, milk and butterfat production, and stage of lactation. These cows were fed seven weeks. Cows on beet pulp silage ate more silage, gained more weight and produced an average of 3.2 pounds more milk a day than those on silage preserved with metabisulfite.

traced to the Broadmead flock, resulted in official order to destroy the entire flock of more than 700 head.

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Beet Pulp Found Best Preservative

Corvallis—Beet pulp is the best preservative to use when putting up grass silage, according to research at Oregon State college.

Two OSC dairy husbandmen recently completed a two-year research project on comparisons of feeding silage put up with dried molasses beet pulp, sodium metabisulfite, and no preservative. They are J. V. Bateman and I. R. Jones.

Beet pulp reduced juice losses and absorbed enough nutrients to more than pay its cost. The beet pulp-preserved silage measured higher in dry matter, was more palatable and digestible, and beet pulp-fed cows produced more milk than cows fed sodium metabisulfite-preserved silage.

Sodium metabisulfite slowed the normal development of silage-preserving bacteria, but produced silage of good quality with a mild odor and bright color. The sodium metabisulfite didn't protect silage in uncovered silos from rain as well as beet pulp.

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